How many times has someone come up to you and said “I could be working, but… can you just give me some money?” Probably never. A drive through Boulder will illustrate on many of the busiest intersections and on ramps destitute-looking people “flying signs” and asking you for your hard earned money. Some people give out of compassion, and other people give out of fear, which help panhandlers to make a sustainable living without working. Boulder could only become a more beautiful city if panhandling were made illegal.

At first glimpse a person holding a sign panhandling may look completely in need of your hard earned charity; however you may be surprised to learn just how much they make and what means they use to earn your money. A local Boulder panhandler named “Max” wrote to the Daily Camera about some of his experiences panhandling here. He wrote, “I’m amazed that I lived as well as I did for 2 ½ years without income from any source.” “Max” would later write that he will make anywhere from about hourly minimum wage to as much as “$339 in only four hours.” “Max” also told the Daily Camera about the violent side of panhandling. He wrote about how panhandlers, who were new to Boulder, would fight for the most profitable spots to “fly a sign.” In Max’s case he and another extremely intoxicated panhandle were in a conflict so severe that Boulder County Sheriff’s had to intervene. Max’s story was not the only time panhandling has led to violence. In a more recent case right here in Boulder a panhandler demanded money from a man. When the man refused he was beaten with a two foot long piece of wood. The panhandler was arrest and later charged with second degree assault.

Many people who do give to panhandlers do so out of kindheartedness and compassion. Experts have said if you want to help, and make sure you compassion is allocated in a way that will help people who need it most, give to any one of many charitable organizations that are established to help those in need. A good source to find out where you can donate to help people is homelessshelterdirctory.org this site is a directory of many homeless shelters, battered family shelters and food distribution centers all over the United States. Another great option is to volunteer your time to help the needy.

Giving and kindness will always benefit our society; however panhandling will continue to create and sustain problems in our beautiful society.